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Bulletin of

The Detroit Institute of Arts

Of the City of Detroit

Vol. IX

NOVEMBER, 1927

No. 2



MAN WITH A FLUTE

TITIAN

GIFT OF THE DETROIT MUSEUM OF ART FOUNDERS SOCIETY

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A PORTRAIT BY TITIAN

In the *Man with a Flute* by Titian, the gift of The Detroit Museum of Art Founders Society, our museum has made one of its most important acquisitions since its foundation. Titian, the greatest genius of Venice, is one of the few brilliant stars in the firmament of art whose splendour seems to have been beyond the range of ephemeral opinion. In fact, his fame, firmly established in his life-time, has never wavered, not even temporarily, as has happened with other leading artists, who have either fallen entirely into oblivion or have at least lost most of their reputation in the course of the years, until rediscovered by modern art lovers and scholars. I need only to mention Giotto and Botticelli, Grünewald and Van der Goes, and from more recent times Jan Vermeer and Greco; and the fact that many of the collectors of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century obviously neglected Rembrandt's immense art, proves that the popularity of even the very greatest may be subject to change. Titian, however, as I have said, has never been "out of fashion," and to possess one or several of his works has been the pride of all the great private and public collections from the days when they were painted, back in the sixteenth century, up to the present time. All this by way of explaining why the acquisition nowadays of an outstanding masterwork by Titian must be regarded as a most fortunate chance.

Until now Detroit has been unable to boast of having a Titian worthy of an ambitious and aspiring museum such as ours. To be sure, there is, beside the *Nymph and Satyr*, done in the workshop of the master but hardly by his own hand, the magnificent painting, *The Appeal*, three half-length figures, a man between two women, recently identified as Jason, Medea and Creusa.¹ In this canvas the woman to the left is now generally accepted as being by the hand of Titian,

while the others were most probably done by Giorgione and Sebastiano del Piombo, an hypothesis which is further sustained by an old inscription on the back of the canvas giving these three names as the authors. The painting was presumably executed by the three masters while the young Titian, together with Sebastiano, was still working in the studio of his elder colleague, Giorgione; and this very fact explains why this figure, notwithstanding its beauty, cannot be regarded as a last word of Titian. With this new portrait, however, so far as the highest quality of Titian's art is concerned, Detroit immediately takes its place beside the most famous galleries of the Old World, such as the Pitti in Florence and the Louvre in Paris.

The painting comes from Germany where for about twenty years it had been in a private collection in Berlin, ascribed to Andrea Schiavone, a rather unimportant follower of Titian. Recently, however, on the occasion of a loan exhibition, several experts on Venetian painting, struck by the extraordinary quality of the painting, expressed—quite independently of each other—the opinion that it was a work by Titian. This view has finally been proved correct, for after the canvas was cleaned, the inimitable technical characteristics of Titian's late style and, in the bottom of the left hand corner, his signature, TITIANUS F. .(ecit), came to light.

The picture shows a black-bearded man, apparently about thirty-five years of age, standing near a table, holding a flute in his left and a pair of gloves in his right hand. The display of colour is very scarce. A neutral brownish-gray forms the background; there is some brown in the flute, grayish-yellow in the gloves, moss-green in the table cloth; and white in the sheet of paper lying on the table. The man himself is clad in a black cloak which falls away from the arms, disclosing sleeves of shining

¹ Paul Schubring. "A Surmise Concerning the Subject of the Venetian Figure Painting in the Detroit Museum," *Art in America*, Vol. XV, 1926, page 35.

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gray silk. The edges of the white shirt showing at the neck and wrists somewhat enliven the sombre nobility of the costume. The entire accent of light and color is concentrated upon the wonderful face of the man, discreetly balanced only by the slightly brushed and subordinated hands, and the paper in the left corner. This face, even within the very sphere of Titian's supreme art, has few counterparts. Whoever has seriously studied it, given himself up, I might say, to its spell, will never forget the grave and searching look of those dark brown eyes, that firm and expressive mouth, the fervid inner life which is revealed. And how marvellously is all this painted! This almost mysterious manner in which, without any petty subtlety—nay, on the contrary, with broad and nearly rough brush strokes—the most delicate secrets of material appearance are rendered: the moisture in the eyes, the hair of head and beard in its different character, the dull splendour of the skin on forehead and cheeks, and the elastic tenseness of the blood-filled lips! One is made to feel the very bones which form this weighty head. Only a few of the very greatest, artists such as Rembrandt, Hals, Velasquez, approached in their most fortunate moments equal results of pictorial perfection.

We do not know the exact date at which the picture was painted, nor who the sitter was, but we believe that Baron von Hadeln, who first published the portrait

in the *Burlington Magazine*,¹ is right in dating it about 1560 and also in his assumption concerning the man represented. Hadeln writes:

"The painting can properly be ascribed, purely on technical grounds, to the sixties. The evidence of this approximate date, combined with other data, may become useful in identifying the sitter. In this connection our attention is arrested by the flute. But does the presence of this instrument suggest that the sitter was a musician or merely a famous dilettante? We are inclined to assume the latter theory, for a certain calm self-confidence and noble reserve in the pose would hardly suit a simple musician. It would therefore seem to be more probable that the person represented was some patron of music of high rank rather than a professional musician."

But after all, the question of the sitter's identity is of secondary importance. What really matters, making the acquisition of the picture of such paramount importance for our museum, is the superb quality of its art. The fact, however, that this man, be he professional musician or dilettante, most distinctly represents a type of noble dignity, perfected culture, and grandeur of spirit which besides Venice scarcely another people or age (with the exception perhaps of Periclean Athens) has ever produced, may help to make this masterpiece the more venerable.

W. H.

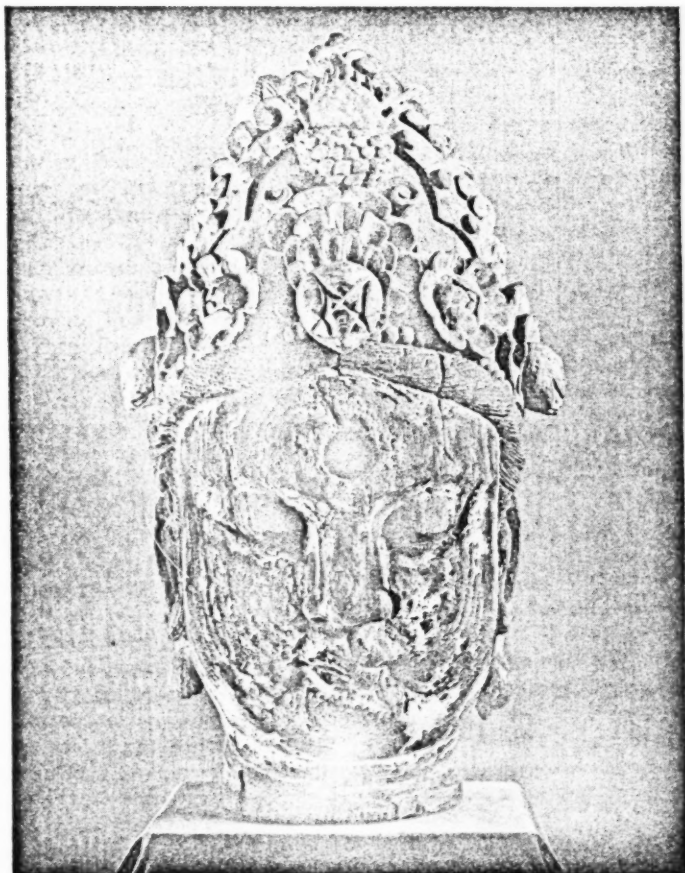
A CHINESE HEAD

What does a Chinese Bodhisattva of the eleventh century think as she looks down from her pedestal in the gallery upon the twentieth century Detroiters who surge around her every day? Certain it is that their thought on seeing her must be one of admiration. Her size alone is impressive;

her face from chin to brow measures sixteen inches, while the complete head is thirty-five inches high. The bare and weathered wood of her cheeks bears scant evidence of her pristine bloom, of the old surface of gesso which was once a delicate pink and later overlaid with gold-leaf. The

¹ Detlev Baron von Hadeln, "An Unknown Titian Portrait." *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. XLIX, 1926, page 234. The picture has also been described and illustrated by Frank Jewett Mather, Jr., in *The Arts*, Vol. X, 1926, page 312.

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BODHISATTVA HEAD (WOOD)
CHINA. SUNG DYNASTY

bits of black crystal in her eyes glint in the light. But not to these does she owe her charm. Rather is her beauty in the poise of her head and in the expression of calm dignity and assurance in her face, the evidence of the sure hand of a master craftsman at work in that great Sung period which Mr. Laurence Binyon¹ has so beautifully described as essentially modern in character.

We might, in the absence of an authentic history of the head, rest our ascription of her date to the late eleventh century upon

the evidence of her expression alone, were there not the ever present danger of our reading into her something that is not there.

Let us then proceed to an examination of details that may contribute to a definite establishment of her age. The material of the head cautions us against rashly assuming any great age for her, for while it is not impossible that wood should have survived from very early periods we should expect from their very perishability that images of wood would be preserved in fewer num-

¹Laurence Binyon, *Painting in the Far East*, Third Edition, London, 1923. Page 134.

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bers than images of stone portraits. It has also been contended that wood was more freely used in the later periods anyway, and probably more in the north than in the south.²

The headdress we must at once discard as a clue, for it is obviously a restoration of later date than the head itself. One detail of the hair, however, may aid us. That is the loop that falls across each ear. Some figures attributed to the Six Dynasties and the T'ang dynasty in a private collection in Peking and in American collections³ have this feature, but it can be found on none of the images of the great early cave sculptures reproduced by Siren⁴ and Tokiwa and Sekino.⁵ Some Japanese figures coeval with the T'ang period of China have this peculiarity, and a picture on stone attributed to Wu Tao-tzu of the eighth century⁶ shows it; so that we can only say that though uncommon it did exist in T'ang times.

The traces of gesso, pigment and gilt tell us little. What then of the features? Do they justify an attribution to T'ang? The general characteristics may be set down as simplicity of modelling, with the preservation of naturalistic, almost an individualistic character; eyebrows that are fairly straight across the forehead and that fall to the lines of a rather broad-bridged nose without meeting; broad eyelids with very little space between lids and brows; narrow eyes but not prolonged; a sophisticated mouth; a squareness of the face relieved by the lightness of the jowls; and a serried chin; the ensemble carved with a good feeling for the fact that the face is a unit and not merely an agglomeration of features. Though some or all of these features might be found in earlier figures, their combination points inevitably to the

Northern Sung period. Their maturity shows that the period was in full flower, while the lack of that sweetness that characterized the Southern Sung indicates that political reverses and Ch'an Buddhism had not yet driven the people in upon themselves, with the artistic results with which we are familiar.

And when we have decided that she must have been made at the height of the Sung period, close to the year 1100, we discover that the closest parallels we can find to her are other images of undoubted Sung attribution, and that the hair loops we remarked are most common at this time.⁷

So much for the date, which is interesting to the art historian, but which nowise qualifies the artistic merits of our head.

Gigantic figures of the gods are made today in China, and their construction illustrates the time-honored method, verified by the examination of wood images of the early periods. Sandal and camphor are the woods preferred, when they can be obtained, because of their qualities promoting longevity. The figures are pieced together, and often very small pieces are used. This necessitates some sort of covering to give a smooth and uniform surface. Formerly gesso or a thin plaster was common, either directly applied to the wood or in combination with paper or cloth, but a kind of lacquer is in vogue now. When the painting is complete all trace of the original wood form is lost. The figures are usually dexterously wrought, though there is little artistic distinction about them. Turning from the works of modern China, modern Detroit can be well satisfied with its head from "modern" Sung.

B. M.

² Oswald Siren, *Chinese Sculpture from the Fifth to the Fourteenth Century*, London, 1925. Vol. I, p. cxviii.

³ Leigh Ashton, *An Introduction to the Study of Chinese Sculpture*. London, 1924, pl. XXVII and XXX.

⁴ Siren, *op. cit.*

⁵ D. Tokiwa and T. Sekino, *Buddhist Monuments in China*. 4 vols. Tokyo, 1926.

⁶ Tokiwa and Sekino, *op. cit.* pl. IV-41.

⁷ Vide, Siren and Ashton, *op. cit.*



MRS. COLIN HUNTER
JOHN SINGER SARGENT
GIFT OF MRS. WILLIAM H. MURPHY

SARGENT PORTRAIT PRESENTED

Closely following the dedication of the new building, Mrs. William H. Murphy made a gift of twenty-five thousand dollars to the Founders Society, indicating her wish that from this fund John Singer Sargent's *Portrait of Mrs. Colin Hunter* be purchased and installed in the museum collection.

In sending her gift, Mrs. Murphy says:

"I have been very much interested in the Institute of Arts since its beginning in the old days of the Art Loan (1883), which took place during the first year of my residence in Detroit, and now that the beautiful new building is completed, it gives me great pleasure to offer you a

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DR. SAMUEL A. BEMIS
CHESTER HARDING
GIFT OF MR. D. M. FERRY, JR.

small addition to your modern pictures."

By virtue of this gift, Mrs. Murphy becomes a Benefactor of the Detroit Museum of Art Founders Society and is numbered among the large donors to the institution.

Although she is prevented by illness from visiting the new building, her gift has filled one of the missing gaps and added to the collection of contemporary art one of its brightest spots. Heretofore, the museum has not had an adequate example of John Singer Sargent, possessing only his landscape, *Home Fields*, a delightful and spontaneous portrayal of nature which the artist did in holiday mood. Through Mrs.

Murphy's gift of the *Portrait of Mrs. Colin Hunter*, the museum has secured an exceedingly pleasing and important example of America's most noted portrait painter. The picture, signed and dated 1896, comes from the very best period of Sargent's work. It shows a charming matron in a black and white gown in the style of the nineties, her hands folded in her lap holding a lacy handkerchief. The charm and character of the sitter have been incisively set down as was Sargent's wont in his most flourishing period. The picture may be seen in Gallery 34.

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MR. JOSEPH ALLEN
JOHN WOOLASTON
GIFT OF MR. D. M. FERRY, JR.

PORTRAITS BY WOOLASTON AND HARDING

The American section of the museum and particularly its early period has been greatly enriched through the gift of Mr. D. M. Ferry, Jr., President of the Founders Society, of a pair of portraits by John Woolaston and a portrait by Chester Harding.

The portraits by Woolaston, which were much needed and admirably suited to the eighteenth century colonial rooms (Gallery 28), are a well-known pair of Mr. Joseph Allen and his wife, who were residents of Clairmont, Virginia.

John Woolaston was an English portrait painter of some note who came to the

colonies to take advantage of a lucrative portrait practice that sprang up with the first flush of affluence in the new country. He worked in New York, Philadelphia and the south and had a particularly good patronage in Virginia, painting among others the portrait of Washington's mother. He was active from about 1750 to 1767. As one may see from this fine pair of pictures, he was a competent painter, whose style somewhat resembled that of Hogarth. His *Portrait of Whitefield, Preaching* is now in the National Portrait Gallery of London.

At the same time Mr. Ferry presented a

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MRS. JOSEPH ALLEN
JOHN WOOLASTON
GIFT OF MR. D. M. FERRY, JR.

Portrait of Dr. Bemis by Chester Harding, who was one of the most noted painters in the early part of the nineteenth century. From a career as a sign painter he rose to the heights of a fashionable portrait painter, living at various times in St. Louis, Philadelphia and Boston, and even making an excursion to London to perpetuate the likeness of the poet Rogers and the historian Allison and while there painting some of the members of the royal family.

Dr. Samuel A. Bemis, the sitter, was an interesting character. He was born in Boston about 1790 and was apprenticed to a watchmaker, a profession which he followed for only a brief period, for in

1815, apparently with no knowledge or experience of dentistry, except his skill in the use of small tools, he bought out a dentist and until sometime about 1845, actively followed this profession, making many inventions in the way of dental tools and contributing much to the knowledge of dentistry.

Dr. Bemis spent his summers in the White Mountains, finally settling there and permanently building himself an English country home which was a model for that day. It is not unlikely that the town of Bemis, New Hampshire, where this portrait was discovered, was named for the doctor. The picture may be seen in Gallery 30.

C. H. B.

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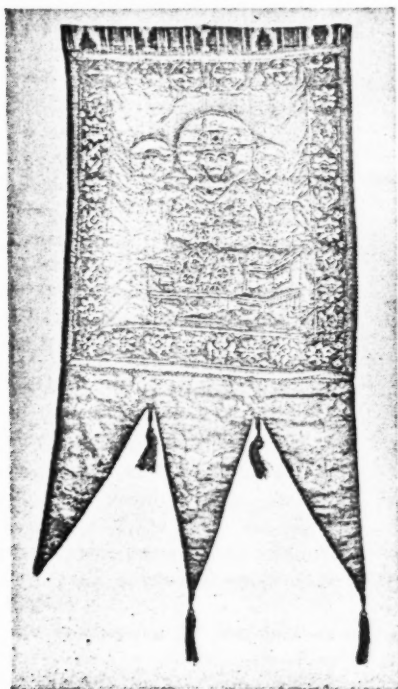
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A BYZANTINE BANNER

The Byzantine banner was presented to the Institute of Arts by Mr. and Mrs. Joseph B. Schlotman. It consists of a rectangular piece of red satin, embroidered in gold and silver thread in a variety of flat stitches and bordered with a gold galloon. At the top a strip of flamed silk forms a double band through which the flag-staff was passed. At the lower end of the banner a piece of flowered gold brocade on a pink ground forms three deep points which are bordered with a narrow blue silk galloon and finished with gold and silk tassels hanging from red silk tape; one of these tassels is missing.

The embroidery represents the Deësis: In the center Christ, Pantocrator, is seated on a throne. His right hand is raised in a gesture of blessing, the left holds a book. He wears the imperial himation and



BYZANTINE BANNER
GIFT OF MR. AND MRS. JOS. B. SCHLOTMAN

diadem, his feet are covered by the long tunic and rest on a footstool. The throne consists of a bench without back support. At his right stands the Virgin, at his left St. John the Baptist, both behind the throne, each stretching out both hands in a gesture of supplication. This central group is framed by a border in which six winged cherubim alternate with cross-spoked flaming wheels, symbols of the higher angelical hierarchies.

In Byzantine art the Deësis was the center of the Last Judgment. The Virgin represents the Church of the New Dispensation and is the mediator between the Judge and the world. St. John, as the last of the prophets and the forerunner of the Lord, represents the Old Dispensation. Thus, as an apocalyptic symbol, the Deësis is found in mosaics, enamels, ivory-carvings and kindred objects of art from the tenth century onwards. The style of the vestments of our three figures approaches that of the late eleventh century ivory carving of Christ crowning Romanus and Eudoxia.

Embroidery, the oldest form of textile decoration, was in great favor during all the early civilizations around the Eastern Mediterranean and was used from early Christian times onward for the adornment of ceremonial vestments and church furnishings. In Byzantium, however, the best type of embroidery dates rather late, probably owing its rise to a decline in the manufacturing of figured silk weaves, a consequence of the unsettled trade conditions.

In the monastery of S. Croce at Avellana a naval standard is preserved which belonged to the Admiral Emmanuel Palaeologos in the early part of the fifteenth century. Like our banner, it is embroidered in gold thread on red silk and shows the Archangel Michael worshipped by the admiral.

The Russian pilgrim Ignatius of Smolensk, gives a description of the vest-

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ments worn in S. Sophia in 1391 at the coronation of Manuel Palaeologos II.¹ It is clear that whatever the difficulties of the Empire towards its close, the splendors of ecclesiastical ceremonial were undiminished, and the priests were vested as richly as in the earlier centuries."

* * * * *

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FOUNDERS SOCIETY

The Annual Meeting of the Detroit Museum of Art Founders Society will be held in the main auditorium, Thursday evening, December 1, at eight-fifteen o'clock.

After a brief business session, outlining the progress made during the past year, the Secretary will show some stereoptican views of the more notable acquisitions and indicate where they are to be found in the galleries. Dr. Samuel S. Marquis, who has been chosen as the principal speaker, will give an address on the "The Use of Art in Expressing Spiritual Realities." Organ music will be interspersed in the program.

Following the program the members will visit the galleries of the Institute, where the objects of art acquired from the funds of the society or donated by individual members will be on view and will be singled out for the inspection of the members.

This being the first meeting held in the new building, and because of the many splendid dedication gifts, we are looking forward to an optimistic gathering of the Founders Society on this occasion.

MICHIGAN ARTISTS EXHIBITION

The Annual Exhibition for Michigan Artists will be held in January, opening with a reception on Wednesday evening, January 4. Michigan artists, including those living out of the State, are eligible. Oils, water colors, pastels, drawings, etchings, wood block prints and sculpture will be acceptable.

The works intended for this exhibition must reach The Detroit Institute of Arts by December 26, as the jury will meet

These embroideries were continued after the fall of Constantinople in the monasteries of Roumania, Bulgaria, and Servia, and examples of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are still in use in the monasteries of Mt. Athos.

A. C. W.

December 27 and 28. Entry blanks may be had at the Institute or will be mailed upon request. A number of prizes and awards will be given as in former years, including the Scarab Club Gold Medal and the Founders' Society prize of two hundred dollars.

This year a commission of ten per cent will be charged on all sales in order to defray the expense of having a salesman present in the galleries during the entire period of the exhibition.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

On account of the very large attendance on Sunday afternoons the hours have been extended on Sundays from 1 p. m., to 9 p. m. It has also been found desirable to change the hour for the Sunday organ recital from 3 to 5:30 o'clock, and hereafter these recitals will be given at the twilight hour from 5:30 to 6:30 p. m.

The inauguration of the new organ on Friday evening, November 3, was marked with great success and similar organ concerts will be given every Friday evening and Sunday afternoon until Easter. Many of the most noted visiting organists of the country will be heard in these programs.

On Tuesday evening, November 22, we will initiate our regular course of evening lectures, when Mr. Benjamin March, newly appointed Curator of Asiatic Art, will give an illustrated lecture on the *Ancient Arts of China*. Seven such lectures will be given during the season. The balance of the course of evening lectures will be given after the new year. The dates and speakers will be announced in the December Bulletin.

¹ O. M. Dalton, *East Christian Art*, p. 357.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MUSICAL PROGRAM

Friday, November 4, at 8:00 p. m. Organ concert by Dr. Francis L. York, assisted by Mr. Archibald C. Jackson, Baritone, and John Koneczny, Tenor.

Sunday, November 6, at 3:00 p. m. Concert presented by the Chamber Music Society of Detroit; Lillian Poli, Soprano, Helen Whalen Yunck, Violinist, Margaret Mannebach, Pianist and Accompanist.

Program arranged by Mrs. Harris E. Marsden, Director of Free Concerts

Miss Clara Dyar, President of the Chamber Music

Society, Chairman of Free Concerts

Steinway Piano furnished by Grinnell Brothers

Friday, November 11, at 8:30 p. m. Concert by the B'nai B'rith Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Dr. Mark Gunzberg.

Sunday, November 13, at 3:00 p. m. Organ concert by Miss Helen Schaefer, Organist of the Grosse Pointe Presbyterian Church, assisted by Miss Pauline Wright, Contralto.

Friday, November 18, at 3:00 p. m. Organ concert by Mr. Guy Filkins, Organist of the Central Methodist Church, with vocal assistance.

Sunday, November 20, at 3:00 p. m. Same as November 18.

Friday, November 25, at 8:00 p. m. Organ concert by members of the Michigan Chapter of the American Guild of Organists.

Sunday, November 27, at 3:00 p. m. Same as November 25.

Friday, December 2, at 8:00 p. m. Organ concert by Mr. L. L. Renwick, Organist of the Metropolitan Methodist Church.

Sunday, December 4, at 5:30 p. m. Concert by the Alpha Province of the Sigma Alpha Iota Sorority.

ILLUSTRATED LECTURES ON THE HISTORY OF ART

For the Members of the Founders Society and their families. (Membership cards must be presented.)

Wednesday mornings at eleven o'clock

November 2. Greek and Roman Sculpture contrasted—MISS HARVEY.

November 9. Gothic Tapestries—MRS. WEIBEL.

November 16. Early Christian, Byzantine and Romanesque art—MISS HARVEY.

November 23. Gothic Art—MISS HARVEY.

November 30. Art of the Far East (Part 1)—MR. MARCH.

December 7. Art of the Far East (Part 2)—MR. MARCH.

EVENING LECTURE

(Open to Public)

November 22, at 8:15 p. m. Ancient Arts of China—MR. BENJAMIN MARCH, *Curator of Asiatic Art.*